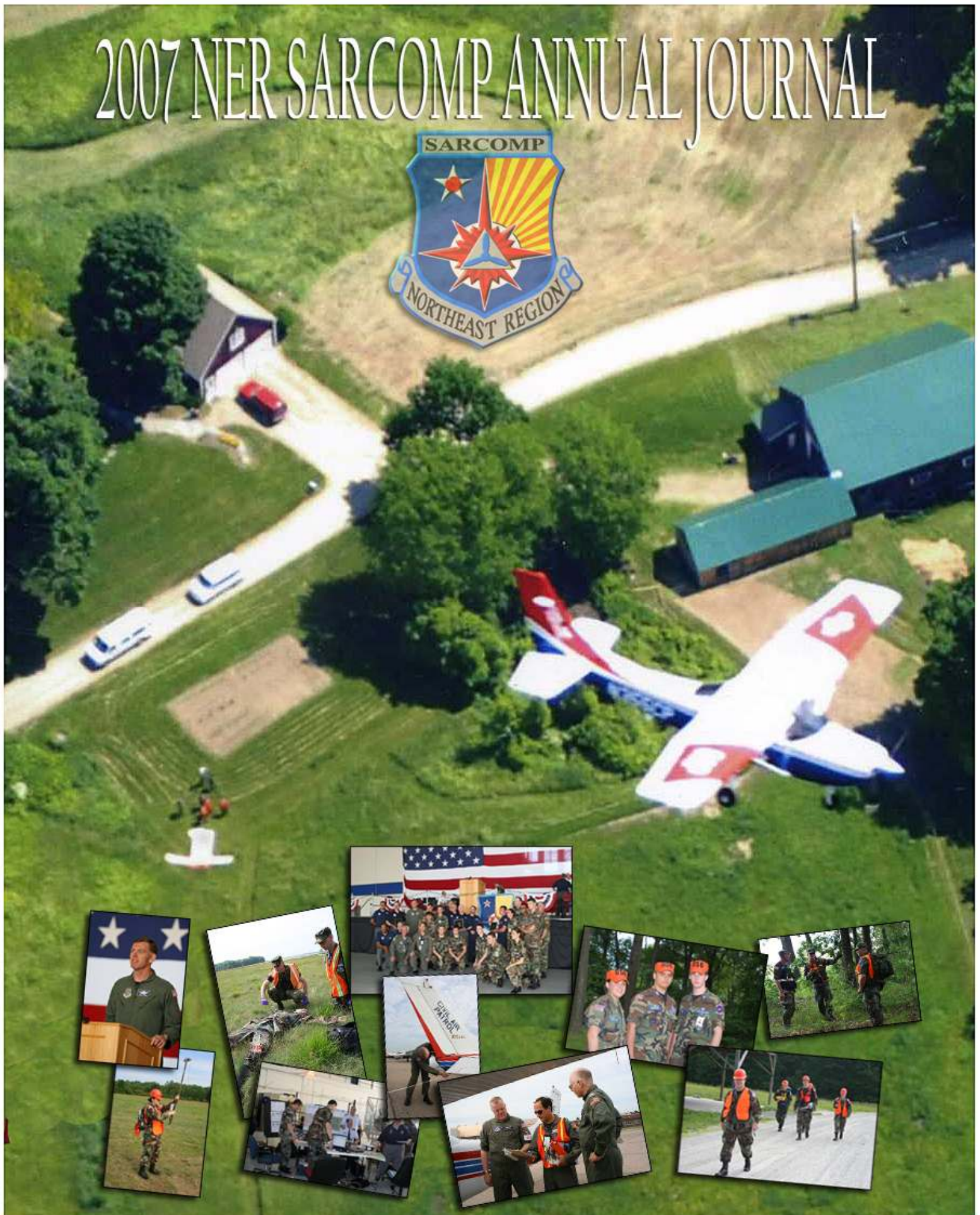


# 2007 NER SARCOMP ANNUAL JOURNAL







**Col Robert Diduch**

#### Editorial Staff:

- **Capt James Ridley, Sr.**  
Public Affairs OIC
- **1st Lt Bill McGee, PAO**
- **2d Lt. Rick Fairchild, PAO**
- **SM Mark Hoover, Photographer**
- **Susan Robertson, National Photographer**



**Lt Col Joe Abegg, IC**

## Letter from the NER Commander

Dear Civil Air Patrol Members,

Our 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States stated, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." This year's Northeast Region's SARCOMP exemplified the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

The dedication and teamwork between senior members and cadets in the search and rescue competition, both air and ground, was impressive. With so many

participants, it was a situation rife with opportunities for miscommunication and errors, yet this was not the case.

The Wings demonstrated a level of professionalism and commitment that produced the positive and dynamic atmosphere in this challenging competition. Focus was on teamwork, communications, safety, knowledge, and attitude. The Wings and their members are to be applauded for their competitive spirit and commitment.

All of you have worked together to make this a successful event. Congratulations to everyone!

On behalf of the Northeast Region, thank you for all your efforts.

Sincerely,

Col Robert Diduch  
NER CC



## A Message from the SARCOMP Incident Commander

My fellow CAP volunteers,

To all the CAP senior and cadet members who participated in the 2007 NER SARCOMP, congratulations! You took part in an exercise that hopefully fine tuned your skills and techniques in Search and Rescue procedures. If there is one thing I want to make perfectly clear it is this: ALL OF YOU ARE WINNERS.

This SARCOMP allowed teams from six of the nine wings within the Northeast Region to not only compete against one another but to learn from each other as well and build camaraderie and esprit de corps among their brothers and sisters from other states, well done. This exercise was not just about competition but about being prepared, a lesson we all learned all too well upon hearing of the exploits of three cadets from the New Hampshire Wing who actu-

ally saved a life while on their way to this competition.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my entire staff, a dedicated group of individuals who gave up much of their time not just during the weekend but for weeks and in some cases, months prior to the competition taking place; this event would not have been possible without their valued efforts. These officers gave their time and talents to ensure that the competition would be a success and walked off the stage today content with knowing they achieved these objectives while others walked away with championship plaques.

Finally I would like to thank USAFR Brigadier General Wallace "Wade" Farris, Jr., the commander of the 439th Airlift Wing here at Westover Air Re-

serve Base and his staff for their assistance. General Farris joined us for the presentation of the awards and his staff made themselves available to us on a non-drill weekend. They went out of their way to make us feel welcome and assist us in any way they could and we appreciated it.

We accomplished a lot this past weekend and hopefully our success will lead to two things: First, provide the incentive for us to hold this event on a national scale in 2008 and second, to motivate all nine of the NER Wings to compete in next year's competition.

Semper Vigilance,

*Joe Abegg*

Lt Col, USCAP

## The 439th Airlift Wing, Westover ARB, MA Home of the C-5



The 439th Airlift Wing, a unit of the Air Force Reserve Command, operates 16 C-5A and B model aircraft at Westover Air Reserve Base, Mass., the nation's largest Air Force Reserve base.

Currently, 2,500 reservists are assigned to the wing at Westover. They train one weekend each month and also serve a 15-day annual tour of duty each year. The 337th Airlift Squadron is the wing's flying unit at Westover.

### Awards Ceremony Honors All, Not Just the Victors

With their peers, fellow team members, judges and event staff looking on, members of the various wing teams which competed in the NER Search and Rescue Competition sat intently waiting to see if their names would be called to come up on stage and accept a first, second or third place honors from Brig Gen Wade Farris, USAFR.

Before the winners were announced however, a special presentation was made to c/Lt Col Eric Perron, who put his skills to the test while in route to the competition by saving a woman's life who was involved in an automobile accident. On this day Cadet Perron was honored by all those present while the NER Commander, Col Robert Diduch, presented him with the CAP Life Saving Award, one of the highest decorations

given by the US Civil Air Patrol.

One by one the event winners were called up, first the winners of the ground team competition were announced beginning with third place which was presented to the Maine Wing. Maine was followed by the second place Massachusetts Wing and the first place New Hampshire team.

Next came the Air Event. Once again the third place team was announced first, this time the victors were the members of the New Hampshire team followed by the Pennsylvania and Massachusetts Wings who took second and first place respectively.

One of the events that got less attention than the air and ground exercises, was the Incident Command Table Top practicum. Winners

here included New Hampshire who once again took third place honors followed by the second place Connecticut team and first place Pennsylvania team.

The final plaques were given out for overall wing performance. In third place was the Pennsylvania Wing. Second place was presented to the New Hampshire Wing and the overall champion for the entire SAR-COMP went to the team from the Massachusetts Wing, who proudly posed for a group photograph at the conclusion of the award festivities.

All that was left now was to shake hands and say goodbye to new friends before departing for home on this Father's Day weekend. One thing was sure, every one was a winner today.

*"One thing was sure, everyone was a winner today."*



Members of the Massachusetts Wing Team gather for a group photo after earning First Place among all the wings in competition.



One of the CAP aircraft involved in the competition prepares for take off and hopefully a date with FIRST PLACE!

*"Yacovone met with the crew and discussed their mission, which involved flying on a northwesterly course" ... "It's been a busy day."*



Massachusetts Wing Cdt Bernard, 17, guides one of the aircraft involved in the competition upon its return.

## SEPARATE WINGS, SINGLE MISSION

The Northeast Region's Search and Rescue Competition (NER SARCOMP) got underway early on Saturday morning at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass., and by 0700 most participants had finished breakfast and were being briefed on their upcoming missions and the existing flying and ground conditions.

CAP members from Wings representing nine states, many of which had never met before, began working together in the air and on the ground, even as they competed against each other. In one such example, a flight crew from Pennsylvania interacted closely with a ground team from Massachusetts.

*0822: The crew from Pennsylvania arrived on the flightline.*

Their Cessna 182 Skylane had been parked and tied down the night before. The three pilots began their pre-flight inspections, with Capt Fred Sherick testing the cockpit instruments and 1st Lt Donald Novi unfastening the tie-downs. 1st Lt S.A. Leasure began a walk-around inspection.

Nearby, Capt Joseph Yacovone of the Westfield Composite Squadron in the Massachusetts Wing watched and prepared for their departure. He had volunteered to serve as Flightline Officer for the day and pointed with pride to all the CAP aircraft lined up at Westover. He smiled and said,

"It's great to be busy."

*0830: The Pennsylvania crew finished their pre-flight inspection.*

The three men had flown to Westover together the night before from their squadron in Allegheny County, Pa., outside Pittsburgh. Due to the heavy volume of air traffic anticipated at the Air Reserve Base all day, the Skylane was pre-fueled, so that left one less task to complete on a very busy morning.

Yacovone met with the crew and discussed their mission, which involved flying on a northwesterly course to the nearby town of Pittsfield. He solicited questions and spoke to them about the terrain in that area. Then he wished them luck and they buckled into the cockpit.

*0842: The aircraft started its engine.*

Cadets from squadrons throughout the Massachusetts Wing provided flightline assistance and marshaled aircraft all morning long. "They're doing a great job," noted 1st Lt Sandy Cassilly of the Westover

Composite Squadron, which is based at the facility that hosted the NER SARCOMP. She kept a watchful eye as the cadets followed procedure and prepared to guide the Pennsylvania crew to the taxiway. When asked if this was too great a task for such young volunteers, Cassilly responded, "I have complete trust in them."

*0845: The aircraft rolled off the blocks.*

For much of the day, the weather at Westover was ideal for flying—until late afternoon thunderstorms rolled in. But in the morning hours, the skies over Western Massachusetts were what pilots like to call "clear, blue, and twenty-two," with visibility extending 22 miles at the very least. Within minutes, the crew was airborne and their real work began as they simulated an actual search and rescue mission.

But even before the Skylane from Pennsylvania had taken to the skies, the cadets from Massachusetts were already working with another crew and another aircraft. Yacovone was right: It was great to be busy.





## Cadet Saves Life on Way to SAR Competition

**BELMONT, NH** – June 15, 2007. Most cadets of the US Civil Air Patrol attend Emergency Services (E/S) training sessions and SAREX events in order to hone their skills and better prepare themselves for an emergency that hopefully will never occur. For one cadet, Eric M. Perron of the Hawk Composite Squadron of Laconia, and a former student EMT with the Laconia Fire Department, being prepared for an emergency proved critical while he was en route to just such a training event.

Perron, 20, a C/Lt Col and honor graduate who just earned an associates degree from New Hampshire Community Technical College, was just five minutes away from his home on his way to the NER SAR Competition being held at the Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, MA. While heading South on Rte. 106, he and two other cadets also on their way to the same SARCOMP, witnessed an accident which occurred about 45 feet in front of them involving a motorcycle which slipped off the back of a trailer and collided

with two other motorcycles traveling behind the vehicle. Exiting their vehicles, Cadet Perron handed his cell phone to C/SSgt Leanne Doucet and grabbed his personal trauma kit and gloves and ran to two victims, a husband and wife from Quebec, Canada who spoke only French.

After examining the husband, he proceeded to treat the woman, whose leg appeared to be twisted after the motorcycle flipped her on the pavement and dragged her about 30 feet. When Cadet Perron cut off part of her blood-soaked pant leg he noticed the leg was completely severed below the knee; Perron immediately applied trauma dressings and constant pressure to the wound which stopped the hemorrhage within a couple of minutes. While Doucet called 911, fellow C/2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Marshall Nye assisted in crowd control and kept the lane clear for the emergency vehicles from the Belmont Police and Fire Department which arrived soon after. The victim was transported to Lakes Region General Hospital and later air-lifted to an

undisclosed hospital; unfortunately the leg was too badly severed to be re-attached, but Cadet Perron's quick action saved her life.

After briefing the local police, Perron was examined by a doctor and cleansed of blood. Perron, along with Doucet and Nye, then completed their journey and took part in the SARCOMP. "The timing couldn't have been better for the victim," Nye said. "If it were anyone else behind the motorcycles she might not have survived." Perron credited the support of Nye and Doucet for helping him save the woman's life. "It was a team effort, it really was," said Perron.

Cadet Perron plans on earning his Spaatz Achievement and continuing as a CAP Senior Member. "I want to teach other cadets what I've learned and to always be prepared," he said. NER Senior Members were notified of Perron's actions and responded quickly by presenting C/Lt Col Perron with the CAP Life Saving Award during the SARCOMP awards ceremony.



The US Civil Air Patrol's Life Saving Award, which was presented to C/Lt Col Eric Perron for his actions on 15 June 2007.

*"The timing couldn't have been better for the victim,"*

*"If it were anyone else behind the motorcycles she might not have survived."*



C/Lt Col Eric M. Perron receives the CAP Life Saving Award from the Region Commander, Col Robert Diduch.



Cadets Leanne Doucet, Eric Perron and Marshall Nye at the NER SARCOMP Barbecue.

# From the Flight Line NER SARCOMP



Aircraft Panel



CAP Planes



Flight Crew Returning



Marshalling!



A View from Above!



Checking the Tiedowns





C/1st Lt David Pankove of the New Jersey Wing, marks where a clue was located.

## Missing Child!

*A young child is missing in a heavily wooded area in Chicopee, Mass.*

*Cody wandered off from the family campsite and was reported missing at 1350 today. The US Civil Air Patrol (CAP) has been dispatched to assist in the Search and Rescue operation (SAR). Incident Command has been set up and the team has arrived...*

*Missing Child...* These words strike fear in any parent, in any rational person. These are words every parent hopes they will never hear. Yet they are words that are often spoken and played out in real life daily.

Thankfully, the words about "Cody" are not true, but part of a scenario from CAP's Northeast Region's Search and Rescue Competition (NER SARCOMP) held at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass., during the weekend of 15-17 June, 2007.

The NER SARCOMP brought teams from six

of the nine states which make up the Northeast Region. Teams competed in several categories of Search and Rescue, both on the ground and in the air. This particular scenario was a Wilderness SAR: a search and rescue mission conducted in an area generally uncultivated and often inaccessible by roads. In other words, we were in the woods.

On this day, I learned firsthand that Search and Rescue work is not glamorous. It is often hard, tiring, and dirty. This late spring day was like many others; hot, humid, and sticky. Personal comfort was not the priority; there was hard work to be done. Moreover, what I also witnessed, though only through a "practice run," was *"a spirit of unselfish giving of oneself in order to help another in need."*

I arrived at the competition search site as the team from the New Jersey Wing was beginning to conduct the search. My first obser-

vation was how the team was well equipped with water, food, emergency gear, and other necessities. I learned that during an actual operation, it will not always be possible to return to headquarters or sit comfortably at a restaurant during mealtime, and the team may not make it to a comfortable bed at night either. Every time a team goes into the field, the members are physically and mentally prepared to spend the night in the wild if the situation so demands. The New Jersey team was prepared to be self-sustained for at least 24 hours.

C/ 1<sup>st</sup> Lt David Pankove, 17, who hopes to one day become an airline pilot, is a four-year member of CAP. Pankove briefed me about the scenario as well as the techniques used by the New Jersey team. "Initially, the team conducted a line search," Panko explained. "The ground team spanned out into a line, with one person commanding the line. When a clue was found the line

*"On this day, I learned firsthand that Search and Rescue work is not glamorous. It is often hard, tiring, and dirty."*



A team from the New Jersey Wing prepares to spread out and start the search during the Wilderness Exercise.

stopped and a marker was set.”

Aiming to “find the objective fast,” the team determined where to search, how to divide an area between limited search resources, and how to craft the overall search effort to increase the likelihood of success at each step. Those were the duties of the Officer in Charge (OIC), Capt Kevin Barstow of Cape May, N.J.

The team members searched for clues and general evidence that would hopefully lead them to locating their objective. During the exercise the team also performed what is known as a “hasty” search. One by one, clues were found, until the time limit of the exercise was reached. At the time of this writing the New Jersey team had found the most clues during the allotted

time.

Some people may ask, why go through all this bother? Why spend so much time, “playing”? I can only answer it this way. It was once said; “The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in combat.” The practice, the lessons learned, and the skills honed have saved thousands of lives during the 65-year history of the Civil Air Patrol. Many more lives will be saved in the future. My father taught me this lesson: “Practice does not make perfect, PERFECT practice make perfect.” For the cadets and officers of CAP, this ultimately saves lives.

CAP’s disaster relief missions, such as those during hurricanes and floods, as well as its Search and Rescue missions, don’t always make front-page headlines,

but CAP’s dedicated members have helped many victims. In any given year, CAP pilots and aerial observers fly more than 1,000 air missions; ground teams not only perform many SAR missions but also distribute tens of thousands of pounds of relief supplies. CAP members in 2005 conducted over 2,500 search and rescue missions, saving nearly 100 lives.

This is Civil Air Patrol. Where there is a need, we’ll be there.



**The New Jersey Wing SAR team pose after a successful test of their skills.**

## Behind The Scenes



Before the first air crew took to the skies, before the first ground team rode off in their vans, and before the first table top exercise took place at the NER SARCOMP, a group of dedicated individuals spent many hours planning, arranging and managing the preparations in order to make this event a reality. Once the weekend arrived it

was up to these same dedicated volunteers to execute their plans and long after the winners were announced and the teams arrived home, these members were still working.

A lot goes into the planning and execution of any event and this SARCOMP exercise was no exception. It begins from the top down, with Lt Col Joe Abegg, the architect and driving force behind the SARCOMP. But Lt Col Abegg was not alone. Joining him were the administrative staff who ensured that all volunteers and competitors were registered and all their needs—including housing—were met.

Judges, evaluators and set-

up crews were also heavily involved in this successful event as were the Operations and Public Affairs staffs. Flightline and safety crews were paramount to the weekend’s overall success.

One group who stood out were the cadets who marshaled the aircraft from Friday through Sunday, along with their officers. Never complaining, these young people spent hours under the hot sun guiding air crews to a safe berth.

It takes a lot to plan an event such as this and it takes even more to see it through. Lt Col Abegg chose wisely and his faith was rewarded with superior performances.

*“Some people may ask, why go through all this bother? Why spend so much time, ‘playing’? I can only answer it this way. It was once said; ‘The more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in combat’.”*



**Members of the planning, operations, administration and judging staffs, sit on the dais as the awards are given to the winning teams.**



## Public Affairs Staffs Working Together



**AFR TSgt Andrew Biscoe, base Public Affairs and CAP Capt James Ridley, the Public Affairs OIC for the SARCOMP, pose in front of one of the base's C-5 Galaxy aircraft.**

*"As a PA Technician for the USAF, I've been impressed with the professionalism from the very first conference call through the onsite meeting and today, and extremely impressed from a coordination and communication perspective."*

Covering an event such as the NER SARCOMP is a daunting task in itself, but doing so on an Air Reserve Base makes it even more of a challenge.

For the CAP Public Affairs team, a group of volunteer PAOs and photographers, this task was made a bit easier because of the assistance of Westover's Public Affairs Office.

Even before the event, TSgt Andrew Biscoe, one of the Public Affairs NCOs at the base reached out to the CAP members and offered any assistance he and his department could give. Sergeant Biscoe, a civilian employee

and reservist, gave up his evening and weekend time to support the CAP members by participating in several conference calls, working behind the scenes with base personnel, and introducing the CAP PA staff to the local media. This included two Springfield television stations, ABC-40 and CBS-3, and the local newspaper, *The Republican*. All three organizations reported on the event.

In fact, the first thing that occurred before the first competition team took to the field was a face-to-face meeting between the PA staffs. TSgt Biscoe and his commanding officer, Maj

Jennifer Christovich, met with CAP Capt James Ridley and his staff in their offices. TSgt Biscoe also made himself available in person on Saturday for the majority of the day and by phone on Sunday.

Biscoe said, "As far as PA coordination, as a PA Technician for the USAF, I've been impressed with the professionalism from the very first conference call through the onsite meeting and today, and extremely impressed from a coordination and communication perspective." The CAP staff felt the same way.

## CAP'S MISSION CRITICAL ON LAND AS WELL

Not all of CAP's missions involve aviation. At the Northeast Region's Search and Rescue Competition (NER SARCOMP) at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass., ground team members also honed their skills by pretending to assist in finding a lost child who had wandered off into a wooded area.

For members of the New Hampshire Wing, one Ground Team event involved a Line Search of clues, and among those clues were a faint blood trail and a (simulated) human body part. The molded "hand"—known as moulage to experienced search and rescue professionals—was found by the CAP members under the most difficult of circumstances.

After the New Hampshire team arrived for the event, they were briefed by Rick Toman, a consultant to the

Massachusetts State Police who served as a judge for the SARCOMP. He explained they would be searching for a six-year-old boy who had wandered off from his family. He offered no assistance in their search, and later noted that he believes himself to be "tough but fair" as a judge.

Within minutes, the team spread out and began finding clues, including a child's sneaker and Life Saver candies. Unfortunately, Toman—who had distributed the clues just hours earlier—couldn't find the moulage hand and decided it must have been carried off by an animal. With just minutes left in the competition, the New Hampshire cadets emerged from the woods with the simulated body part, and impressing Toman as well.

"We do a lot of CAP training and we really enjoy it," said

Toman. He also gave full credit to the senior members, particularly Capt Cameron Thompson of the Amtrano Composite Squadron in Nashua, and said, "One of the things they have to have is good team leadership."

After the event concluded, Thompson praised his team of cadets by saying, "I think they did a great job. It's definitely the most realistic event I've ever done. And even if we don't win [the competition], it's still excellent practice."

As it turned out, Thompson was being modest. The next morning, CAP judges declared that the New Hampshire Wing had captured first place in the Ground Team competition.

As it turned out, Thompson was being modest. The next morning, CAP judges declared that the New Hampshire Wing had captured first place in the Ground Team



**Members of the New Jersey Wing during the wilderness exercise phase of the competition search for clues.**

## GRISLY FINDS ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR CAP

For those who fly in CAP, search and rescue operations often have a somewhat distant feel, as pilots, scanners, and observers usually look down from a vantage point several thousand feet above. During the Northeast Region's Search and Rescue Competition (NER SAR-COMP) at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass., ground team members got to practice their skills up close and personal.

They did so in the face of simulated—yet realistic and somewhat frightening—conditions. One Ground Team event called for a Wilderness Rescue of two critically wounded air crash victims, and the simulation was as real as it could get.

Early on Saturday morning, a team comprised of members of the Connecticut Wing descended on an open stretch of field in a remote corner of the Air Reserve Base. Suddenly an Air Force major rushed up and exclaimed there were two wounded survivors in the weeds ahead. The CAP team sprang into action and stumbled upon the "victims," as well as several competition judges.

In reality, the other participants were Air Reserve personnel assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing's Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Westover. These Air Reservists—including nurses and paramedics—were volunteering their time and expertise to assist the CAP members. In fact, two

young members of the 439th AES performed exceptionally well as actresses posing as victims of a simulated crash. One lay prone and bloodied and feigned unconsciousness, with her leg severed. The second "victim" sat on an aircraft tire, moaning about her friend's imaginary diabetic condition, before she too fell unconscious.

As the CAP members performed triage and prioritized how best they could provide assistance under such difficult conditions, the Air Reserve personnel peppered the Connecticut team with questions. In some cases, these questions were required for the judging; in other cases, they were designed to elicit "bonus" points while simultaneously teaching the CAP volunteers about real-world disaster response scenarios.

While the CAP members tended to the wounded, they were quizzed about how best to handle a sucking chest wound without proper medical tools (use cellophane wrap) and the ABCs of reviving and keeping alive an unconscious victim (think Airway, Breathing, Circulation). Eventually the judges nodded their assent.

After the patients were sta-

bilized, the Connecticut Wing received a debriefing. "The team organized well and assessed the patients in an appropriate manner," said MSgt Mike Linnehan of the 439th AES. "They really worked well. I think they were able to save both patients."

For Linnehan, participating in the SARCOMP provided insight into how CAP performs its missions. He noted, "I think we should hold this every year. In fact, I'd like to see CAP here for our Team Yankee exercise." He was referring to a joint first-responders activity attended by personnel from the Air Force, Red Cross, FEMA, and other emergency organizations.

For the CAP volunteers, the competition proved to be educational and enlightening. But the SARCOMP also helped the members of the 439th AES who so graciously volunteered their Saturday morning; the training exercise was critical for them as well. As the Connecticut team packed their gear to move on to the next event, Linnehan quietly noted that many of these Air Reservists will be deploying to Iraq in January. Then he added, "It will be my second tour."



A reservist from the 439th Airlift Wing stationed at Westover volunteers to act as a victim during a competition exercise.

*"As the CAP members performed triage and prioritized how best they could provide assistance under such difficult conditions, the Air Reserve personnel peppered the Connecticut team with questions."*



Hollywood-style makeup was used to simulate real wounds on the volunteer reservists who assisted CAP at the SARCOMP.



The CAP Ground Team approaches the victim of a simulated aircraft crash in the fields at Westover ARB, MA.



Overall SARCOMP Award Winners				
	Ground	Air	ICS	Wing
First	NH	MA	PA	
Second	MA	PA	CT	NH
Third	ME	NH	NH	PA
Overall Wing First Place: Massachusetts				



The sun sets on the flight line at Westover



The NER SARCOMP was covered locally by:

**The Republican.**



## Local Media Take an Interest in Covering SARCOMP at Westover

Not just one, but three local media outlets expressed interest in and covered the NER SARCOMP at Westover ARB.

Two Springfield news stations, ABC-40 and CBS-3, sent news crews to the base to film the SARCOMP activities and interview cadets and seniors alike. Each of their broadcasts were shown later that evening on the six and ten-thirty o'clock news broadcasts.

Springfield's major newspaper, *The Republican*, sent reporter Michael McAuliffe out to interview the SARCOMP staff and competitors, especially those from the "hometown team", the Massachusetts Wing. McAuliffe spent two hours on base and his article was featured on page one of the Metro Section on Sunday morning. All three media outlets were escorted by the CAP Public Affairs staff who were grateful for the Westover Base's PA staff's assistance in getting "the word out."



## Questions and a Few Answers...

During the NER SARCOMP, the US Civil Air Patrol AP Public Affairs staff compiled a list of questions and asked two Air Force Reserve Base personnel and two CAP officers how they would answer them. Some of the questions were directed towards CAP personnel and a couple were directed to the Air Force. Interviewed were Maj Mike Perrone, USAFR, Base Operations, **MP**, TSgt Andrew Biscoe, USAFR, Base Public Affairs, **AB**, Col Robert Didduch, CAP, NER Commander, **RD**, and Lt Col Joe Abegg, CAP, National Director of Emergency Services and the SARCOMP's Incident Commander, **JA**.

### Why do you feel this exercise is so important?

**MP**: "It's important in terms of coordinating intra region training while exposing CAP personnel to AF procedures."

**JA**: "It's important because the bottom line is that we want to motivate, build morale and charge up our people to be the best they can be and in E/S we are responsible to save lives and protect property and this gives them a purpose and aids in retention, especially for those members who rarely get called out on missions."

**AB**: "From an AF PA perspective it's important because it helps get the word out on the value of CAP and its responsibilities which are very important in the light of the fact that CAP handle's 90% of the SAR missions in the US. It's Public Affairs's job to make sure that CAP cadets aren't just seen at air shows and handling crowd control".

**RD**: "Cross pollination. This gives a chance for all the wings (states) to compete and work together and it's been a long time since we did one and I'm looking forward to a national SARCOMP in the future."

### What were your expectations for this weekend's SARCOMP and were they met?

**MP**: "I hoped that we (AFR) members of Westover ARB would be able to provide any operational and logistical assistance to the AF Aux to make their exercise a success and I think we did that."

**JA**: "To get everyone together and motivate members and teach our own people how to mobilize and travel great distances and work with personnel from other regions and wings and yes, I think we succeeded in our goals. I just wish the other three wings from the region that were absent were there, they missed out on a lot of great training and great relationship building."

**AB**: "I wanted the relationships between the Air Force and CAP staff's to work well together. As far as PA coordination, as a PA Technician for the USAF, I've been impressed with the professionalism from the very first conference call through the onsite meeting and today and extremely impressed from a coordination and communication perspective."

**RD**: "Expectations? I didn't really have any but I think with what they (*SARCOMP staff*) had and the personnel they have done exceptionally well. They were dealt a hand of cards and there were no more cards and they played with those they were dealt and did a great job"

### Do you feel events like these are of benefit to the USAF and CAP? Why?

**MP**: "Yes. Events of these are a benefit the AFR because we get to work with CAP personnel and learn about them and what their all about and they about us. We task CAP with Search and Rescue Missions and it's great for our personnel to see how they function and help in their training."

**JA**: "It's a benefit because it increases our membership and since SAR is tasked to the Air Force it helps them and gets our people more training and prepared and I feel we're accomplishing the mission, especially here and now."

**AB**: "Absolutely. It shows CAP personnel the operations of a major ARB and the coordination between them. It also shows the AFR personnel how important the members of CAP are and how they support the air force mission. The American public needs to know about this coordination and what CAP does. The general public sees only CAP seniors and cadets at public events like air shows and parades, but doesn't always see the community service and ES aspect of CAP."

**RD**: "I think they are very beneficial not just to CAP but to America and the Missions for America, it's no different than a pilot staying proficient, we have to as well and we need to stay current for the Missions for America. It seems like we train for ever but that's what we have to do."



### **Have you ever held an exercise of this size before with CAP?**

**RD:** “Not under my command.”

**JA:** “Not as the IC, no, but I have been involved in 19 Regional Staff Conferences, 23 Cadet Encampments and 8 Region SAR Competitions in the 1980’s during my CAP career.”

### **What intrigued you the most about hosting this event?**

**AB:** “Finding out what this was about and about CAP in general. Also, I was interested in how from a distance CAP’s PA department works, I handle a lot of these things from our perspective but this was different and I enjoyed working with the CAP PA Staff very much.”

“My expectations have been met. We’ve maintained such good communications through phone and email and especially in the face-to-face meeting yesterday which was critical. I believe in the physical meeting; email and phone are great but face-to-face is always better. Communications between the AFR PA office and the CAP PA office has been outstanding.”

### **As the NER Commander, do you believe this exercise was a success and what comments do you have?**

**RD:** “Absolutely. Were we without problems? No. Every exercise has problems but can you work them out, that’s the key and we were able to do that here. Its called professionalism.”

### **Are you planning on making this an annual event?**

**RD:** “Yes, right here in Westover is our plan.”

**JA:** “That’s the idea and we want to take this to a national level.”

### **What benefits do you feel the competing teams received from this exercise?**

**RD:** “I think that every state brings something different to the table, nobody thinks the same way but when you bring everyone together they act, work and think as a team. We all have but one goal, to serve the Missions for America.”

**JA:** “Like I mentioned before, getting our member’s motivated, polishing their skills and working with other units and learning how to be mobilized. This is kind of our ‘reach’ where we can send local units to other areas where their services are needed. We are after all a National Organization, where there’s a need, any of us can be called on to render assistance, we need to be ready to answer the call.”

### **What did you hope to accomplish by holding the SARCOMP here at Westover?**

**RD:** “I think that we all have learned a heck of a lot just from having this exercise, even if it wasn’t a great success it was a learning experience. We hold these on a state level on a continuous basis, but now we take it back and work together, multiple states it’s great. Holding it at Westover was a no brainer, it’s a perfect location for this event and the base personnel have been a tremendous assistance to us. If we can do this on a national scale that would be super.”

### **What was involved in the planning of this exercise and how do you feel the execution went?**

**JA:** “One of the best things about the planning of the SARCOMP was that we were able to copy the plans from the competitions of the 1980’s and at what the Canadians do at their competitions and we were able to cherry pick the very best of both. We have been working on this heavy duty since November of 2005, so there’s been a lot of changes since then. I also received a lot of input from my national staff.”

### **What are your thoughts on the efforts and skills of your SARCOMP Staff, who didn’t win awards but never the less were a big part of the competition?**

**JA:** “I had a great staff. People that went above and beyond the call of duty and made my life a lot easier. Hopefully the word will filter down about that too. Everyone learned and grew including the staff and there’s no doubt in my mind that they will be even better and make the next competition we do even better, and believe me I’ll be asking for their assistance. I also hope that all of this work doesn’t go unnoticed by all the wing members that weren’t here and we hope they will join us next year.”

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